

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 13 PRESS ROUNDUP

LONDON FOR AMB/EX
BERN FOR INDIAN OCEAN DELEGATION

1. KEVIN KLOSE OF WASHINGTON POST, IN FEBRUARY 12 DISPATCH FROM MOSCOW, SAID USSR, IN 5,000 WORD STATEMENT PUBLISHED AS PRAVDA EDITORIAL, EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN OVER LACK OF SALT PROGRESS AND SPELLED OUT IN UNUSUAL DETAIL ITS VIEW OF MAJOR REMAINING OBSTACLES TO NEW SALT ACCORD. KLOSE REPORTED THAT "IN STRONGLY WORDED STATEMENT, SOVIETS RE-NEWED THEIR INSISTENCE THAT WASHINGTON ACCEPT SHARP RESTRICTIONS ON CRUISE MISSILE AND OTHER MAJOR U.S. WEAPONS SYSTEMS. SOVIETS SPECIFICALLY INSISTED THAT NEW AGREEMENT UNCLASSIFIED

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MUST CONFINE CRUISE MISSILE LAUNCH CAPABILITY ONLY TO HEAVY BOMBERS, AND SAID IT MUST BAR TRANSFER OF WEAPON TO AMERICA'S ALLIES....TIMING AND DETAIL OF SOVIET STATEMENT WAS VIEWED BY WESTERN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES AS REFLECTING MOSCOW'S CONCERN THAT CARTER ADMINISTRATION FEELS NEED TO TOUGHEN ITS NEGOTIATING STANCE IN FACE OF MOUNTING CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM OF PROPOSED TERMS OF NEW SALT TREATY. ONE SOURCE SAID KREMLIN APPEARED TO BE TRYING TO SIGNAL WASHINGTON THAT SOVIET LEADERS 'HAVE LIMITS TO THEIR FLEXIBILITY'" KLOSE SAID SOVIETS UNDERSCORED THEIR LONG-HELD POSITION

THAT THEY COULD NOT ACCEPT U.S. DEMANDS FOR BAN ON UP-GRADING LAND-BASED ICBM'S -- HEART OF SOVIET STRATEGIC STRIKE FORCE -- WITHOUT BAN ON IMPROVED AMERICAN SUBMARINE-LAUNCHED MISSILES, CRUISE MISSILES AND RELATED WEAPONS." KLOSE SAID PRAVDA ALSO LABELED AS "ILL-INTENTIONED FABRICATIONS" RECENT REPORTS THAT USSR HAS DEVELOPED HUNTER-KILLER SATELLITES. KREMLIN, HE POINTED OUT, SOUGHT TO EMPHASIZE ITS OWN WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE ON REASONABLE ISSUES BY DECLARING ITS "READINESS IN PRINCIPLE" TO AGREE THAT IF SINGLE MISSILE OF CERTAIN TYPE AND SIZE IS TESTED WITH MIRV WARHEADS, THEN ALL MISSILES OF THAT TYPE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED MIRV'D. PRAVDA REITERATED KREMLIN'S REJECTION OF U.S. PROPOSAL TO LIMIT DEVELOPMENT OF NEW LAND-BASED ICBM'S WITHOUT SIMILAR LIMITATIONS ON OTHER STRATEGIC WEAPONS SYSTEMS. PRAVDA EDITORIAL SAID BACKFIRE "HAS NOTHING AT ALL TO DO WITH NEOGITATIONS BECAUSE IT DOES NOT BELONG TO CLASS OF STRATEGIC WEAPONS." KLOSE SAID SEVERAL OBSERVERS SPECULATED THAT THIS ADAMANT REFUSAL ON BACKFIRE MAY SIGNAL EVENTUAL REJECTION OF CARTER ADMINISTRATION PROPOSAL THAT SOVIETS AGREE IN SEPARATE LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING FROM BREZHNEV THAT BOMBER BE LIMITED IN USE.

2. DAVID K. WILLIS OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, IN UNCLASSIFIED

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DISPATCH FROM MOSCOW, SAID PRAVDA STATEMENT, COVERING NINE MAJOR TOPICS, WAS FLEXIBLE ON SOME, STERN ON OTHERS. HE SAID USSR IS USING "TOUGHNESS, FLEXIBILITY AND UNPRECEDENTED PUBLICITY TO SAY: 1. KREMLIN WANTS NEW AGREEMENT, AND FAIRLY SOON, BEFORE U.S. OFF-YEAR ELECTIONS BEGIN TO COMPLICATE TALKS WITH GUSTS OF RHETORIC. 2. IT HAS TACITLY ACCEPTED SOME OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S POSITIONS, BUT THERE ARE DEFINITE LIMITS TO ITS CONCESSIONS, WHICH U.S. MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT." WILLIS SAID DURING RECENT U.S. TRIP, HIGH-RANKING SOVIET DELEGATION EXPERIENCED FIRHAND SOME OF FIERCE DEBATE IN WASHINGTON AND AROUND COUNTRY ON SALT TWO. PRAVDA MAY HAVE SPOKEN OUT AT THIS TIME, IT IS THOUGHT, BECAUSE OF THAT EXPERIENCE, WILLIS SAID. "SO KREMLIN TOOK OPPORTUNITY, IT IS THOUGHT, TO WARN BOTH HAWKS AND DOVES IN U.S. THAT EFFORTS TO BLOCK TREATY OR TO SNATCH ONE-SIDED ADVANTAGES FOR U.S. WERE DANGEROUS." WILLIS SAID IF THERE IS TO BE NEW SALT AGREEMENT BY SUMMER, CARTER MUST "SOLVE IMMENSELY COMPLEX ISSUES WITHIN HIS OWN GOVERNMENT, WITHIN SENATE WHICH MUST RATIFY ANY NEW AGREEMENT, AND WITH HIS NATO ALLIES IN EUROPE." HE SAID "ANALYSTS THINK OVER-ALL TONE WAS Milder THAN CAUSTIC EDITORIAL LAST APRIL 4 WHICH FOLLOWED FLAT SOVIET REJECTION OF CARTER PROPOSALS MADE HERE LAST MARCH."

3. WASHINGTON STAR REPORTED FROM LONDON FEBRUARY 11 THAT BRITISH MILITARY AUTHORITY SAID USSR IS CONDUCTING EXTENSVE

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF GERM WARFARE DESPITE MOSCOW'S RECENT DENIAL. SOURCE WAS AIR VICE MARSHAL STEWART MENAUL, FORMER COMMANDER OF BRITISH NUCLEAR BOMBER FORCE WHO HAS SPECIALIZED IN RESEARCH AND WRITING ON MILITARY AFFAIRS SINCE RETIRING FROM ROYAL AIR FORCE IN 1967. MENAUL SAID "THERE IS FIRM EVIDENCE OF THIS WORK AND ALSO OF RESEARCH ON METHODS OF DEVELOPMENT." HIS PAPER WAS PUBLISHED BY PRIVATELY FINANCED FOREIGN AFFAIRS RESEARCH INSTITUTE.

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4. NUCLEAR FUEL (JANUARY 23) REPORTED THAT DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY PLANS TEST "SOMETIME THIS YEAR" OF LOW-ENRICHED FUEL FOR HIGH POWER RESEARCH REACTORS. FUEL BEING DEVELOPED JOINTLY BY DOE-GENERAL ATOMIC WOULD BE ONLY 20 PERCENT ENRICHED AND WOULD BE LACED WITH ERBIUM AND CLAD WITH ZIRCONIUM TO COMPLICATE DIVERSION, DESIGN WHICH SUPPORTERS SAY ALREADY HAS APPROVAL FROM "POWERFUL ACDA," NUCLEAR FUEL REPORTED, ADDING THAT OUTCOME OF 300,000 DOLLAR PROGRAM IS UNCERTAIN. VANCE

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